

NOT
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THAN
#20

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PLIES



TONIGHT'S EPISODE: PUNS CAN BE BAD FOR YOU



Over the past few months of unemployment I've made an interesting discovery. I don't know for sure what it means, or why it should be, but it's undeniable: since I haven't been working, I'm *much* more enthusiastic about roleplaying. It's a flashback to my college days—I'd play for six or seven days a week if I could! Unfortunately (or perhaps fortunately) there's no way for me to do that. I'm lucky to have one game to play in as it is.

This just in...I've finally given in and taken a long (six-week) temp assignment. So far, it hasn't been one of my better experiences: it's not as bad as work at the firm used to be, but it's anything but stimulating. And while it might not be strictly accurate to say that the temp agency *lied* to me, but they certainly gave me a mistaken impression about the job...I wouldn't have taken it if I'd known what it *really* involves. Ah well! It's only temporary, and if I really can't stand it I can always leave. Besides, if I stick through it I can reward myself by taking June off. I haven't had a summer free since college. It would be nice...and after that I can look for a *real* job.



DANGER! DANGER, WILL ROBINSON!

The decision on the renewal of *Babylon 5* is going to be made over the next month or so. According to the producer of the show, the odds are about 50/50 either way. This isn't because of poor ratings (they've actually been pretty good, despite awful time slots). The problem is that B5 is a syndicated show, and there are fewer and fewer independent stations around all the time. Most of them have been swallowed up by Fox, UPN, and the WB network, which aren't terribly interested in purchasing a syndicated program.



That's a pity, because B5 is some of the best science fiction that has ever been done for television. I wouldn't

necessarily say that it's a timeless classic, mind you, but as far as SF on TV goes it's an excellent show.

As it stands, viewer action might be the deciding factor for whether the show is renewed or not. That support is needed in the form of letters asking local stations to continue carrying B5. Incidentally, in the local Boston area it has been reliably reported that WSBK, the main station carrying B5, is not inclined to renew the show (I suspect that this is in part because of the idiotic and constant attacks on WSBK by a few crazed B5 fans over the last year or two).

A support page has been set up on the *Babylon 5* home page, which I'll probably link to on the [Interregnum](#) site. That page lists local TV station addresses and managers. If you'd like to write to your local station and don't have access to the Web, send me email, a postcard, or call me and I'll get the relevant info to you.

I don't know about anyone else, but I'm really sick of shows that insult my intelligence. *Babylon 5* doesn't (or not as often, anyway), which makes it worth saving in my book.



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COMMENTS #18



Rich Staats: Re “The Future of Gaming”: good points, all of them. I’m not sure how pervasive “dark” genres are in modern roleplaying products, though. I know that they’re there, but are they really dominant? Or are we just over-focusing on the more outré examples? * It seems likely that the trend towards “darkness” in published games is an attempt to offset the decline in popularity of RPGs. I don’t know if this has been reasoned out by the producers of such games, but I suspect that these games are an attempt to make roleplaying “cool”. Since the image of gaming has long been as a fairly geeky (and therefore boring) pastime, “darkness” may be an effective antidote. I wonder if it’s the only antidote, though? * As I read “How to Moderate a CON Panel” the phrase that was uppermost in my mind was “now you tell me!” ☺

Virgil Greene: To jump back to IR #17: you asked “Who else has taken filthy lucre for their scribblings, and how can we join them?” Add me to the list. The Unspeakable Oath will be printing my short-short story “The Old Thing” in an upcoming issue—and since they do pay a (small) per-word rate, I can count myself as being a *paid* author. ☺ As for how to do it, I may not be the best to give advice. But patience, persistence, and practice are obviously key elements. Which is a sly way for me to say that regular APA writing is, without doubt, an excellent way to improve writing skills. ☺ * Re *Predictions*: you’ve made good observations, and given your track record so far I’ll take them seriously. Wizards of the Coast’s cop-out on RPGs is shameful, but hardly surprising. It’s one of the dubious advantages of being a pessimist: the worst news isn’t surprising.

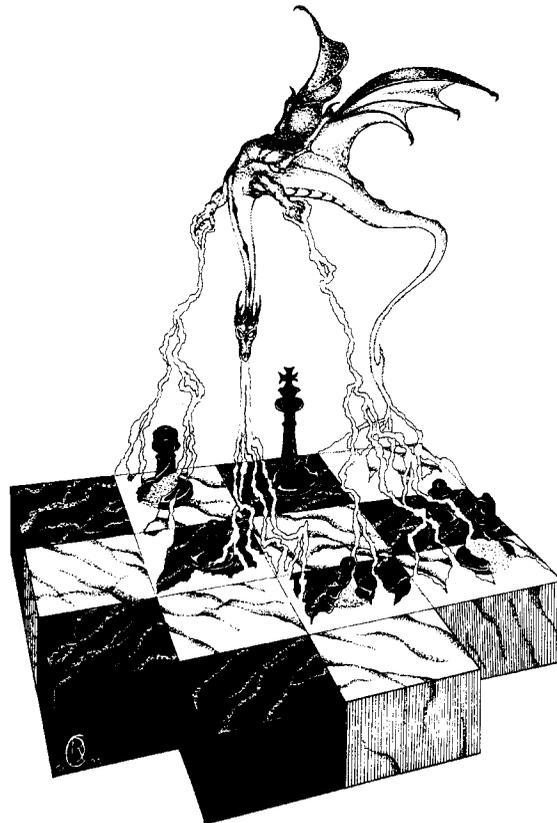
Joe Teller and Kiralee McCauley: Electronic publishing may well be the wave of the future; still, I think that books will never entirely go away. What *frightens* me about electronic publishing is the collateral consequence that commerce may take over the net. I suspect that a commercially-run Net would be too expensive for me to operate the Interregnum web site, for example. Certainly telephone and cable companies seem to feel that they can charge hundreds of dollars per month for access, and given the political climate in Washington it seems entirely credible that Congress may hand the megacorps a Net monopoly. I hope I’m wrong. * Re Conspiracies, in particular that of the tobacco companies: I highly recommend the “Special Tobacco Issue” of Mother Jones magazine, which is on the stands now. It’s a blood-chilling revelation of just how an effective conspiracy can turn the universe on its head.

Gil Pili: I found your writeup of the start of the IR RQ group highly interesting, of course. In the time since, I’ve drawn a few conclusions. Going with Glorantha may have been a mistake, for one thing. I fear that the players who aren’t familiar with the world are getting less out of the game than the experienced RQers. Speaking only for myself, I fear that as a GM I didn’t manage to bring home the unique, fun qualities of Glorantha. Don’t get me wrong—I enjoy the game a lot, both as a player and GM—but I don’t think that the enjoyment is being spread around equally. Which is one reason why I may want to get out of Glorantha for a few weeks and run a “Floating Isles” scenario. * So, another novel is begun in IR! I wonder if The Wild Hunt ever had more than one novelization running at a time? I don’t recall anyone other than George Phillis ever doing one... In any case, the beginning is quite interesting, indeed. I look forward to more. * Regarding the post office, I’ve taken steps to reduce my contact with them. I’ve had a Book Rate rubber stamp made up, and bought a postal scale. I only need to go to the PO to buy stamps, mail one 1st class issue of IR to verify the weight of the issue (my scale is pretty cheap).

Whoops! I’m out of time. The remaining comments for #18 and the comments for #19 will have to wait until

Take care. all!

—>Pete



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